

Living Faith



Dear Fellow Soul Shapers,

My life has changed forever.....I have cancer. I have the kind that is treatable, but someday will come back. Our family calls it the "Unplanned Adventure". The day I was diagnosed was a day I will never forget..... Nothing prepares you to hear the words "Elayne, I am sorry to tell you, you have cancer." My world began spinning totally out of control, what do you mean, I have cancer?and it was not just me that was thrown for a loop....so was my husband, my kids, my parents, extended family, my friends, and the congregations that I serve. All those you would expect..... It was our community too....total strangers. There were no words.

How was I going to tell my grandchildren? How was I going to tell my confirmation class? How would they react to the side effects of the chemo that I would be receiving over the next six months? Fortunately, I found help from our synod staff, as well as the social workers and health care navigators that were at the cancer center, that we are not alone. I learned a lot and I would love to share some of the helpful information they shared with me.

This newsletter will offer some ideas to help talk about life changing medical situations such as cancer but may apply to other situations as well. I am learning to embrace the unknown....to walk in faith, Thanks be to God!

Blessings on the Journey,
Elayne Werges, DM



This information has been prepared for you by the **Northwestern Iowa Synod-Home Life Network**

for use by families and local congregations. For more ideas about how you can pass on faith in your homes

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BAPTISMAL PROMISES

**TO LIVE
AMONG GOD'S
FAITHFUL
PEOPLE....**



How to talk to Kids about "Cancer" & Other Tough Stuff.

- Pray together-out loud. Allow enough time for hard conversations. Include children in talking about cancer. Use open communication. Be honest....Use the difficult words...cancer, chemotherapy, radiation.
- Make no promises that can't be kept. Use terms that are strait forward and truthful. This is not going to be an easy time for anyone. The person with cancer will need extra attention and help throughout treatment and probably after.
- Encourage kids to ask questions. If you don't know.... admit it and find someone who knows the answer....and never guess.
- Talk about fears. It is ok to cry, be sad, and sometimes even laugh all at the same time. Be clear that this is not a contagious disease. But there may be changes this disease is serious. The treatments are grueling and the side effects leaves one tired. Sounds and lights may be more irritating and more annoying. There will be good days and there will be bad days. Usually the bad days fall 3-4 days after a chemo treatment. There may be some isolation precautions. Stress that these are for everyone safety.
- Let them ask questions....Let them see and touch the bald head and other things that are safe to touch.
- Invite close family members, including grandchildren who are older, to go along to the chemo treatment (bring plenty of things to do)
- Let them help. Bring water glasses, make a snack; (everyone is different but cold and creamy things such as ice cream, pudding, Jell-O, and yogurt are popular.) Let them draw and pretend. This helps them cope and internalize their feelings.

Helping Someone Cope With Cancer.....

Give them a "Treatment Bag"



Having to go to the hospital regularly takes a toll on everyone. Treatment bags keep everything that someone with cancer might need as they go back and forth from appointments and treatments. This bag is indispensable to the person who will receive it. This would make a dandy service project. Make several and give them out at a cancer clinic or one at a time to neighbors who might need them. Lap quilts and prayer shawls are also nice touches to give to those who need them.



A few things to remember. Use a large and colorful bag with pockets. There are patterns available on line. Leave space for the user to be able to add things, especially a change of clothes. Sometimes a treatment may end up being a hospital stay. Avoid lotions with fragrances. Encourage travel size packages of lotions, gels, first aid kit, and wet wipes. These bags are so appreciated. Be sure to write a personal note of encouragement and include it in the bag.

What TO say: What NOT to say:

- "Can I pray for you?"
- "I am thinking about you."
- "I would like to bring you a meal, what tastes good to you?"
- "We miss you."
- "I am sorry to hear....."
- Humor is always good!
- "Tell me your stories...."
- "You are not alone."
- "God loves you."
- "I'm not sure what to say, but I want you to know I care."
- "How are you doing?"
- "If you would like to talk about it, I'm here."
- "This is God's plan"
- "This is a punishment for...."
- "When _____ had this she _____"
- "Everything is going to be ok."
- "Does cancer run in your family?"
- "What stage are you in?"
- "Just let me know what you need."
- "I know how you feel."
- "You should...." Followed by anything.
- "You are strong, you can beat this, just fight more."
- "There is this treatment I just heard about....."

"Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. For I am the Lord your God." Isaiah 43:1-2

Things for the Bag

Adult Coloring book and colors, pens, or markers
puzzles
Inspirational Books/Bible
Wet wipes
Small bag of tissues
Tooth brush, tooth paste, brush holder/dental floss
Mouth wash
Q-tips
A Stress ball
Visine eye drops
Triple antibacterial cream
First aid kit with band aids
Hemorrhoid cream
Nail strengthening product
Nail clippers/emery board
Instant Ice packs- Hot and cold compress
Plastic utensils
Thermometer
anti bacterial gel
A hat/colorful scarves/pugs
Sun screen
Lip balm
Hand lotion-unscented
A folder to put papers in
A journal-pass it around and have people write inspirational messages.
Thank you cards and stamps
Note pads
Tylenol emesis basin
A pen/pencil
Latex/plastic gloves
Zip lock Plastic bags
Dark chocolate/ chewing gum
Mints
Sugar free candy/Lemon Heads or lemon drops
A water bottle
Puzzle/Sudoku books
A fan
Stool softener/Imodium
Gas gift cards
Lap pillow
Snuggly blanket or quilt
Slippers/socks
Small snacks/dark chocolate

Leave room for them to put in:

Favorite books A change of
Ear buds or Beats clothes
Electronic screens
Medications